AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. The claims are in the format as required by 35 C.F.R. § 1.121.

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of identifying a visitor at a network site comprising:

receiving, at a website server, [[an]] a network address from of a visitor server computer and a first characteristic of a requesting visitor computer from the visitor server computer over a first network, wherein the visitor server computer is communicatively coupled to the requesting visitor computer over a second network and wherein the first characteristic of the requesting visitor computer is obtained, by the visitor server computer, from a header portion of a request for information sent from the requesting visitor computer to the visitor server computer over the second network;

determining, at the website server, if a second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer is needed from the visitor server computer;

requesting, by the website server, additional information regarding [[a]] the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer after receiving the address and the first characteristic, wherein said requesting additional information comprises sending, by the website server, a request for the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer to the visitor server computer over the first network;

receiving, at the website server, the additional information regarding the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer from the visitor server computer over the first network, wherein the second characteristic is obtained, by the visitor server computer, from the header portion of the request sent from the requesting visitor computer to the visitor server computer over the second network; and

generating, at the website server, a first visitor identifier using the network address provided by the visitor server computer, the first characteristic of the requesting visitor computer and the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the first visitor identifier is performed using only the network address and information within a user-agent string of [[a]] the request originating from the requesting visitor computer.

3.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the user-agent string includes a browser identifier for a browser application on the requesting visitor computer and compatibility information regarding the browser application.

4.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first characteristic of the requesting visitor computer comprises a type of computer, a CPU identifier, an OS, a browser application, a version of a browser application, compatibility information regarding the browser application, locale information, an accessory that can be activated by the browser application, a display size, a resolution setting, or whether a programming language is enabled.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the visitor server computer is different from the communicatively coupled to a plurality of requesting visitor computers over the second network.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, further comprising sending wherein the first characteristic is sent from the requesting visitor computer to the visitor server computer before the website server generating the first visitor identifier.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, further comprising:
        receiving the address from the visitor server computer and a second characteristic of a second requesting visitor computer, wherein the third second requesting visitor computer is different from the visitor server computer and the requesting visitor computer; and
        generating a second visitor identifier using the network address of the visitor server computer and the second characteristic of the second requesting visitor computer.

8.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:
        the visitor server computer and the requesting visitor computers are the same computer;
        the first characteristic is a first characteristic of a first browsing environment of the requesting visitor computer; and
        the method further comprises:
        receiving the address from the visitor server computer and a second characteristic of a second browsing environment of the requesting visitor computer, wherein the first and second browsing environments use the same OS, browser application, and version of browser application; and

generating a second visitor identifier using the <u>network</u> address <u>provided by the visitor</u> <u>server computer</u> and the second characteristic <u>of the second browsing environment of the</u> <u>requesting visitor computer</u>.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the first visitor identifier is performed without the use of a cookie.

10.   (Cancelled).

11.   (Cancelled).

12.   (Currently Amended) A data processing system readable <u>storage</u> medium ~~comprising~~ ~~code embodied in a data-processing-system-readable medium~~ <u>storing computer-executable</u> <u>code for identifying a visitor at a network site</u>, the code comprising:

an instruction for ~~accessing an~~ <u>a website server to access</u> [[an]] <u>a</u> network address ~~from~~ <u>of</u> a visitor server computer and a first characteristic of a requesting visitor computer <u>from a</u> <u>visitor server computer over a first network, wherein the visitor server computer is</u> <u>communicatively coupled to the requesting visitor computer over a second network and wherein</u> <u>the first characteristic of the requesting visitor computer is obtained, by the visitor server</u> <u>computer, from a header portion of a request for information sent from the requesting visitor</u> <u>computer to the visitor server computer over the second network</u>;

<u>an instruction for the website server to determine if a second characteristic of the</u> <u>requesting visitor computer is needed from the visitor server computer</u>;

an instruction for ~~requesting information regarding~~ <u>the website server to send</u> a <u>request</u> <u>for the</u> second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer <u>to the visitor server computer</u> <u>over the first network</u> after receiving the <u>network</u> address <u>provided by the visitor server</u> <u>computer</u> and the first characteristic ~~wherein requesting information comprises sending a~~ ~~request for the second characteristic~~ of the requesting visitor computer ~~to~~<u>from</u> the visitor server computer;

an instruction for ~~accessing~~ <u>the website server to access</u> ~~received information regarding~~ the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer <u>received</u> from the visitor server computer, <u>wherein the second characteristic was obtained, by the visitor server computer, from</u> <u>the header portion of the request sent from the requesting visitor computer to the visitor server</u> <u>computer over the second network</u>; and

an instruction for ~~generating~~ the web server to generate a first visitor identifier using the network address provided by the visitor server computer, the first characteristic of the requesting visitor computer and the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer.

13. (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein the code further comprises an instruction for ~~generating~~ the web server to generate the first visitor identifier ~~is executed~~ using only the network address and information within a user-agent string of ~~a~~ the request originating from the requesting visitor computer.

14. (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the user-agent string includes a browser identifier for a browser application on the requesting visitor computer and compatibility information regarding the browser application.

15. (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein the first characteristic of the requesting visitor computer comprises a type of computer, a CPU identifier, an OS, a browser application, a version of a browser application, compatibility information regarding the browser application, locale information, an accessory that can be activated by the browser application, a display size, a resolution setting, or whether a programming language is enabled.

16. (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein the visitor server computer is ~~different from the~~ communicatively coupled to a plurality of requesting visitor computers over the second network.

17. (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable storage medium of claim 16, wherein the code further comprises:

an instruction for ~~accessing the address from the visitor server computer and~~ the web server to access a second characteristic of a second requesting visitor computer received from the visitor server computer, wherein the second requesting visitor computer is different from the visitor server computer and the requesting visitor computers; and

an instruction for ~~generating~~ the web server to generate a second visitor identifier using the network address of the visitor server computer and the second characteristic of the second requesting visitor computer.

18.   (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable <u>storage</u> medium of claim 12, wherein:

~~the visitor server computer and the requesting visitor computers are the same computer;~~

the first characteristic is a first characteristic of a first browsing environment<u> of the requesting visitor computer</u>; and

<u>wherein</u> the code further comprises:

an instruction for ~~receiving the address from the visitor server computer and~~ <u>the</u> web server <u>to access</u> a second characteristic of a second browsing environment <u>of the requesting visitor computer from the visitor server computer</u>, wherein the first and second browsing environments use the same OS, browser application, and version of browser application; and

an instruction for ~~generating~~ <u>the web server to generate</u> a second visitor identifier using the <u>network</u> address <u>provided by the visitor server computer</u> and the second characteristic<u> of the second browsing environment of the requesting visitor computer</u>.

19.   (Currently Amended) The data processing system readable <u>storage</u> medium of claim 12, <u>wherein neither the first characteristic nor the second characteristic of the requesting visitor computer is a cookie and</u> wherein ~~the instruction for generating~~ the first visitor identifier is ~~executed~~ <u>generated</u> without the use of a cookie.

20.   (Cancelled).

21.   (Cancelled).

22.   (Currently Amended) A system for identifying a visitor at a network site comprising:

~~individual~~ <u>a plurality of requesting</u> visitor computers;

a network site computer; and

a visitor server computer bidirectionally coupled to the ~~individual~~ <u>plurality of requesting</u> visitor computers and <u>to</u> the network site computer, wherein:

the visitor server computer is configured to not provide an address of any <u>of the</u> individual <u>requesting</u> visitor computer<u>s</u> to the network site computer; and

the network site computer is configured to<u>:</u>

request ~~information regarding a first characteristic~~ <u>the visitor server computer to send one or more characteristics</u> of at least one <u>of the plurality of</u> requesting ~~individual~~ visitor computers ~~wherein requesting information comprises sending a request for the~~

first characteristic of the requesting individual visitor computer to the visitor server computer,

receive, information regarding the first characteristic from the visitor server computer, a network address of the visitor server computer and the one or more characteristics of the at least one of the plurality of requesting visitor computers, wherein the one or more characteristics of the at least one of the plurality of requesting visitor computers are obtained, by the visitor server computer, from a header portion of a request sent from the at least one of the plurality of requesting visitor computers to the visitor server computer, and

generate a visitor identifier from [[an]] the network address received from of the visitor server computer, the first characteristic, and a second characteristic the one or more characteristics of the at least one of the plurality of requesting individual visitor computers.

23.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 22, wherein at least one of the individual plurality of requesting visitor computers is not configured to receive cookies.

24.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 18, wherein the visitor server computer regulates communications across a firewall, wherein each of the plurality of requesting visitor computers operates behind the firewall, and wherein the network site computer and any of the individual plurality of requesting visitor computers communicate to each other via the visitor server computer.

25.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 22, wherein the visitor server computer provides is configured to provide a characteristic of the at least one of the plurality of requesting individual-visitor computers to the network site computer in response to receiving the request sent from the at least one of the plurality of requesting visitor computers to the visitor server computer.